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ABSTRACT

Parenting is the toughest job there is, and yet, there is very little training. Most parent their children by the methods their parents used. Parenting involves skills that must be learned. Even among good parents there is always room for improvement. This book is for persons who want to be better a parent or guardian. In addition to introductory materials and several appendices, the book is divided into three parts. Each part is filled with worksheets and activities to guide reflection, as well as pertinent advice. Topics covered in part one, "Self-Esteem is the Key," are: the importance of high self-esteem; parents damage self-esteem in their children; and, ways to build your child's self-esteem. Part two, "Communication is Crucial," covers: communication is important; and improving communication with your children. Finally, topics covered in part three, "Discipline Makes the Difference", are: why discipline is important; some suggestions on how to discipline children; parenting styles; some situations for you to try. Appendices are: Ten Suggestions for Enhancing the Self-Esteem of Your Children; Eight Suggestions for Improving Communication with Your Children; Ten Suggestion for Disciplining Your Children; and Charts You Can Use in Disciplining Your Children. (JBJ)

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Successful Parenting

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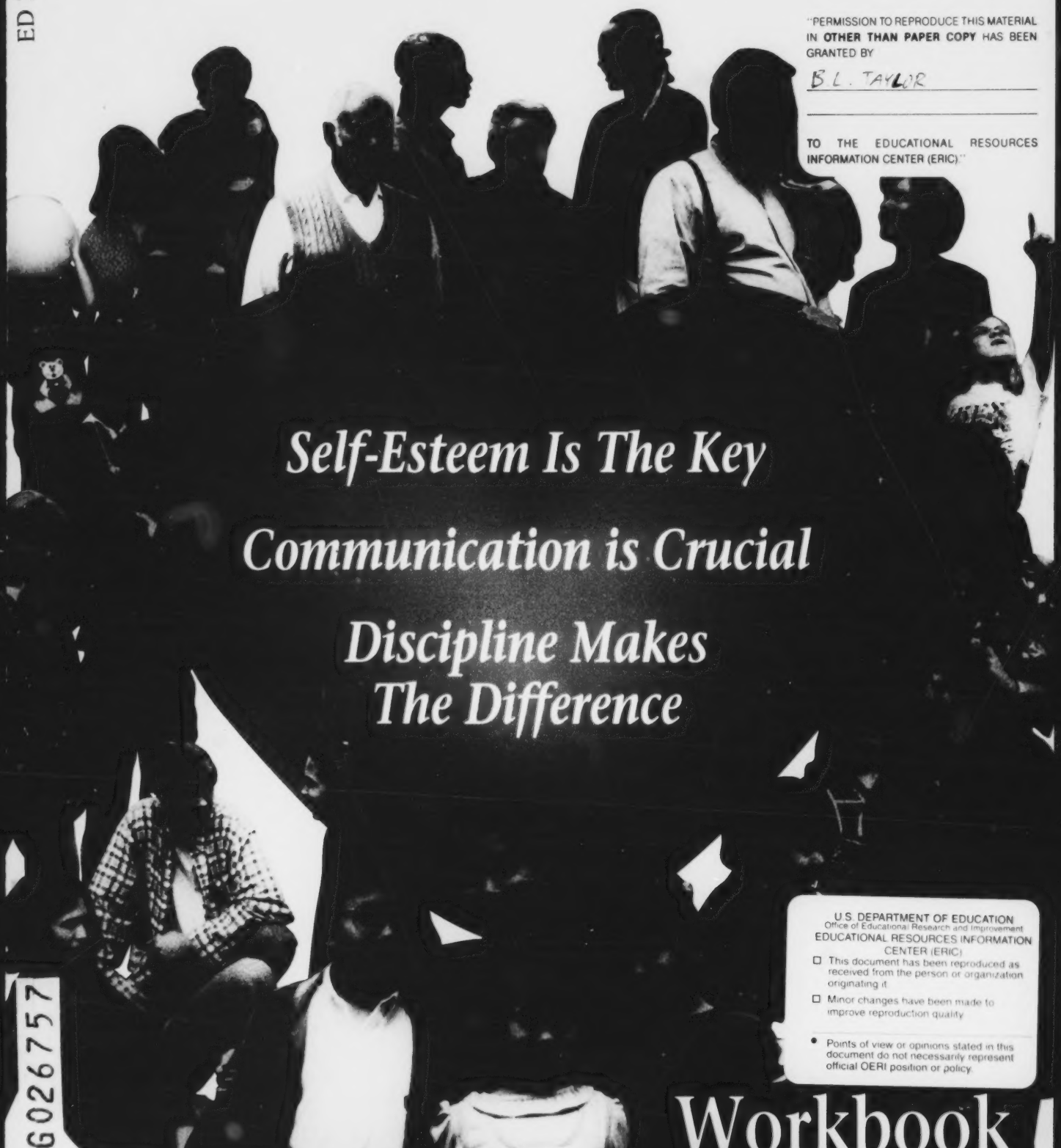

Self-Esteem Is The Key

Communication is Crucial

Discipline Makes The Difference

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Workbook

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SUCCESSFUL PARENTING

Written by Barbara Lynn Taylor, M. Ed.

SELF-ESTEEM
COMMUNICATION
AND
DISCIPLINE

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our sons, Scott and Ryan, for giving me lots of practice parenting and for filling my life with joy.

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APPENDIX:

TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCING THE SELF-ESTEEM OF YOUR CHILDREN

EIGHT SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN

TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCIPLINING YOUR CHILDREN

CHARTS YOU CAN USE IN DISCIPLINING YOUR CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

Parenting is the toughest job there is, and yet, there is very little training. We are taught how to drive a car. We pass a licensing test and we know we're ready for the road. Where is the operating manual for that precious baby? We know we are supposed to feed them, give them clothes and a place to live. But beyond that, what are the rules?

There are no absolute rules. That's what makes it so tough. Most of us parent our children by the methods our parents used. That may be good or bad. We add to that what we see and hear from neighbors and relatives and from TV. Occasionally we read a newspaper clipping or a magazine article. But, do we feel confident? Parenting involves skills that must be learned. Even among good parents there is always room for improvement.

This book is for the person who wants to be a better parent or guardian. I have tried to make it straightforward. I've included questions and assignments that will help you use the suggestions in the book. Please take the time to do these. They'll really help. Best wishes and I hope you enjoy your role as a successful parent.

Barbara Lynn Taylor

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barbara Lynn Taylor has a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and Home Economics from Meredith College and a master's degree in Guidance and Counselling from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

She has twenty year's experience as a teacher and a guidance counselor.

She presents workshops on the subjects related to counselling and parenting on local, state, and national levels.

She has hosted a weekly radio talk show known as "Make Time for Children", concentrating on issues relating to families. She is a regular guest consultant on television programs on issues relating to school, children, families, and parenting.

She is a partner in Richards & Taylor Video Productions, where she writes and produces educational and promotional videos and related materials.

She is married and the mother of two boys.

WHAT IS SUCCESSFUL PARENTING?

Successful parenting is many things. Certainly it's feeding, clothing, and giving a home to the children in your care. It's making sure that your home is a happy place to live. Successful parenting is also contributing to the kind of persons your children will become including the success they'll achieve within themselves, in the home, with their friends, and on the job.

Take a moment to think about the things you want for your children 20 to 25 years from now. Please list the 10 most important things you want for them.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Please see page 25 for possible answers.

In order to help our children have such things and such characteristics, it is important that we spend time and energy on those areas. Yes, it is hard in today's times, when many days it seems that putting a roof over their heads and food in their mouths is about all we can manage. But, it's so important!

So, now take a moment to think about you and your children. Answer the following questions:

1. What can you say or do today to help your children to be happy when they become adults?_____

_____

2. What can you say or do today that will help your children to get a job, to have financial security, or even to be rich when they grow up?

_____

_____

3. What can you say or do today that will help your child to have a happy relationship with a spouse and/or children when they grow up?

_____

_____

4. What can you say or do that will help your child to be healthy both physically and mentally?

_____

_____

5. What can you say or do that will help your child with spiritual development?

_____

_____

6. What can you say or do that will help your children be friendly, kind people who think about and try to help others?

_____

_____

Please see page 25 for possible answers.
So, let's assume that you have done all of the things above and put to use other good

So, let's assume that you have done all of the things above and put to use other good ideas that you've thought of. Is that enough to make sure that your parenting will be successful? I don't think so. These are important, but I think there are many more things involved in being a successful parent.

In this book, we'll learn about the three areas that I believe are the very most important: building your child's self-esteem, communicating with your child, and disciplining your child. I believe these three are the heart of successful parenting. None of us will ever be perfect parents, but we can all learn and improve. You have taken a very positive step toward being a more successful parent by reading and doing the activities in this book. Good for you!

As you read this book, remember, nobody does it all right. Congratulate yourself for the things you do well. If you hear an idea and you think it might help in your family, write it down and promise yourself to try it. You'll be helping your children and you'll feel better about yourself as a parent.

SELF-ESTEEM IS THE KEY

PART ONE

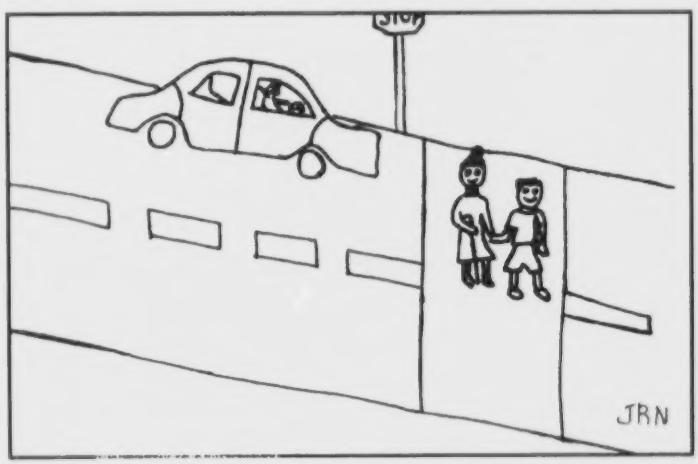
CHAPTER ONE

THE IMPORTANCE OF HIGH SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. When you like yourself, you're more likely to be successful. Children with high self-esteem perform better in school. A child with a low IQ, but high self-esteem may do even better in school than a child with a higher IQ but low self-esteem. We parents play the most important role in the development of self-esteem in our children. It's up to us to be sure we're doing things that build, and don't destroy, self-esteem.

To help our children, first we should help ourselves. We should make sure our own self-esteem is high. It's a two way street. If we have low self-esteem, it may often be difficult to be successful parents. If we're not successful parents, we might have low self-esteem.

How can we tell if our children have high self-esteem? These children are confident; they take risks; they're not afraid to fail; they bounce back after they have trouble with something; they don't worry about people not liking them; they help others; they praise others; they're happy and smile a lot; and they tell the truth, even when they know they might get in trouble.



At school, they will probably often ask questions and volunteer answers. There are exceptions. It is possible that a child with high self-esteem could be shy. It's also possible that a very outgoing child may be covering low self-esteem. The parent has to be the judge of whether there's a problem. It's important that we know our own children and watch for areas of concern.

Write down the names of each of your children and the characteristics of children with high self-esteem that they have:

Example:

MARY	_____	_____	_____
happy	_____	_____	_____
takes risks	_____	_____	_____
smiles	_____	_____	_____
truthful	_____	_____	_____

Kids with high self-esteem can sincerely say, "I'm glad I'm me!"

CHAPTER TWO

PARENTS DAMAGE SELF-ESTEEM IN THEIR CHILDREN

We heard, as children, that "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Don't believe it. Words do hurt. Parents often say things to their children like: "You act like you have no sense at all!", "What in the world are you thinking about?", "I can't believe anybody can be so stupid!", "Can't you do anything right?", "Why don't you act your age?", "When are you going to grow up?" "How many times do I have to tell you?", "You're more trouble than you're worth!", or "Sit down and shut up!"

It's easy to understand how frustrated and angry a parent can get. It's easy to understand how those thoughts can come into a parent's mind. But, it is very important that we parents think twice before letting those words come out of our mouths. Verbal attacks like that hurt at the time and they often hurt years later.

Do you remember any times when someone said those things to you? It hurts, doesn't it?

Instead of us parents being one of the causes for low self-esteem in our children, let's work hard to help our children feel good about who they are. It just may be the greatest gift we can give!

On the lines below, write anything you remember being said to you when you were a child that really hurt. Do you remember how old you were? Do you remember who said it? Does it even hurt today? I'll bet it does.

CHAPTER THREE

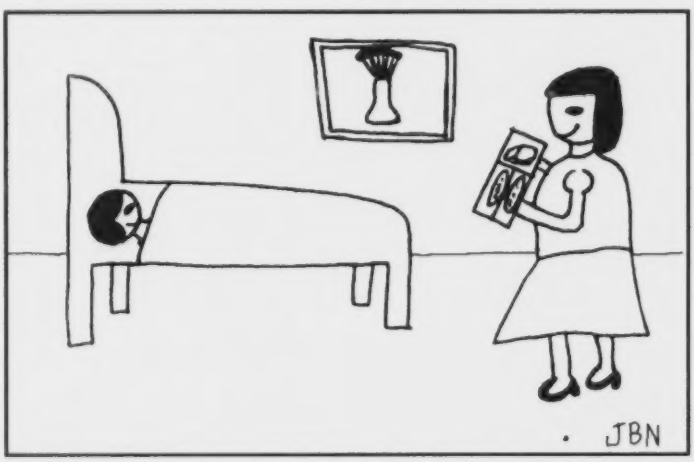
WAYS TO BUILD YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM

SECTION ONE

WORK ON YOUR OWN SELF-ESTEEM

Parents have to feel good about themselves before they can help their children feel good about who they are. There are many ways to do this. Here are a few:

1. Join a support group in your community. Some are at churches. Some are organized to help with a problem you or one of your family members might have such as an illness.
2. Set a goal and then work to reach it.
3. Learn a new skill.
4. Help someone else.
5. Make friends and have fun with them.



List your strengths a parent:

_____

_____

_____

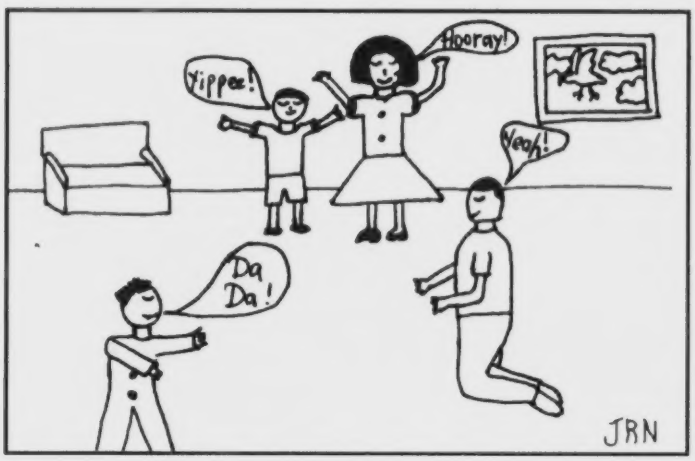
Do you ever wish there were things about you as a parent that were different?

_____

_____

SECTION TWO

PRAISE EFFORTS TOWARD A GOAL



When our children are toddlers, it's easy to praise them and even to cheer for them when they accomplish something. Do you remember when your child first walked across the room? You probably smiled, clapped, laughed, and maybe even took pictures or videos. That helped your child continue to progress.

Often when children get older, we parents wait for them to reach a certain goal. Then we let them know they did well. It would be better if we the encouraged steps along the way.

Let's say your daughter is learning to play the recorder at school. Instead of waiting until she can perform a song perfectly, compliment her when she gets the first part right. Or, tell her the sound of her notes is good even if her rhythm is not right yet.

Another example could be cleaning up the kitchen. Let's say your twelve-year-old son is cleaning up the kitchen after dinner. Instead of waiting until it's cleaned to perfection, you could say, "You did a nice job putting away the leftovers," or "You washed the dishes well," or "The counters look very clean." That keeps him moving along. It lets him know that even if he can't do it all perfectly, there are things he can do well and can feel proud about.

SECTION THREE

UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE EACH CHILD AS AN INDIVIDUAL

We parents must treat each of our children as individuals. It is important that we parents understand the stages of child development. We need to know what is going on inside our children. That helps us to know what to expect. Then we can have goals our children can meet. For example, a mother might think that her four-year-old son is too old to wet his bed. So when he does wet it, she might yell at him. That would lower his self-esteem. The mother didn't know that it is normal for a four-year-old boy to wet his bed. If we know about child development, we won't have to worry about so many things. We'll see that our children are normal and right on schedule.

So, go to your local library or bookstore and get a book or books on child development. There are many excellent ones. There is a series by Louise Bates Ames, Frances L. Ilg, and Carol Chase Haber that is particularly good. It is from the Gesell Institute and has separate books about children at each age.

Don't compare your child to anybody else, especially to a brother or sister. Comparisons like that really hurt for today and for the future. Instead of saying to Julio, "Your brother Manuel is much neater than you are," leave Manuel out of it and just say, "I wish you would keep your room neater." And don't turn around right after that while Julio is listening, and say something like, "Manuel, **your** room looks very neat." That's comparing too. This idea even applies to positives such as saying to Rosa, "You can run much faster than your sister Maria." Don't talk about Marla. Just say to Rosa, "You are a fast runner."

We should be sure there is something that each one of our children can do that the others can't do well or don't even try to do. Possibilities are: playing basketball, baseball, football, or soccer. Or, doing gymnastics, swimming, diving, making mechanical repairs, building things, playing a musical instrument, doing crafts, singing, cooking, sewing, or writing. Are there others you can think of for your children? The important thing is that your child can feel proud of the skill he or she has in that area and that a brother or sister isn't likely to steal that glory.

SECTION FOUR

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO FEEL SUCCESS

Activities provide opportunities for success. When we do something well, we feel good. Think of the reverse. If we never introduce our children to activities or we never allow our children to do things, how are they ever going to feel proud? It's hard to feel proud of yourself for sitting in front of the TV all day.

Another way we parents can help our children feel success is to ask them to do chores. The chores need to fit the child's age and abilities. They shouldn't take too much time. Children may complain a bit, but, if you teach them to do something and they do it well, down deep they'll feel proud of themselves. That will build their self-esteem.

Today's families are so busy. Often we parents don't think we have the time to let our children do things for themselves. We don't have time to teach our kids to tie their shoelaces, so we tie them ourselves or we buy velcro shoes. We only have 25 minutes to fix and eat lunch, so we make the peanut butter and jelly sandwich instead of letting our child do it. Somehow we need to slow our lives down. We need to be patient enough to let our children take five minutes to do something we could do in ten seconds.

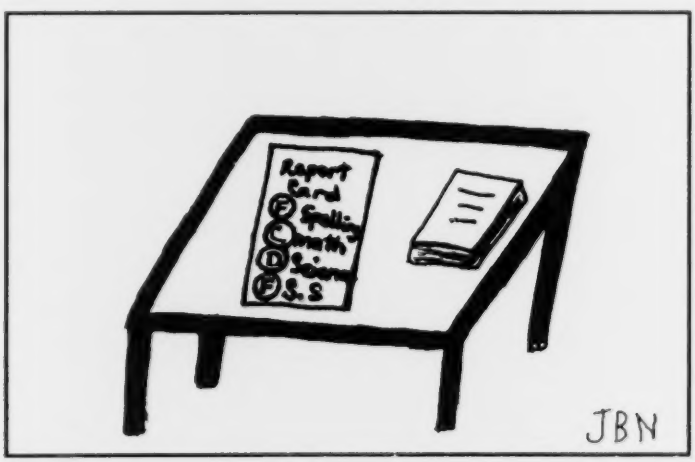
How we handle the papers our children bring home from school is one more way we can help our children feel success. It's a good idea to take time to look at the papers together. Talk about what they did that was right. Display some of them in some special place like on the refrigerator or in an album.

These are all good ways to make a child feel special.

Think about what you usually do when your child brings home a report card. Do you talk about the good grades? It's easy for us parents to jump on the bad grades, isn't it?

Grades should tell students and parents where the child is doing well and where the child needs to improve. Bad grades do not mean the child is a bad person. They don't mean the child can't improve.

Sometimes a report card is really bad. What can you do then that would be positive? First of all, look for anything good and mention it. Secondly, think about whether this is typical for this child or not. Then notice if there's a pattern to the problem areas. In a helpful tone of voice, talk about improving. Try not to put the child down. Make plans to talk to the teachers and then make a plan. This is a good place to show the love that says, "I love you no matter what!"

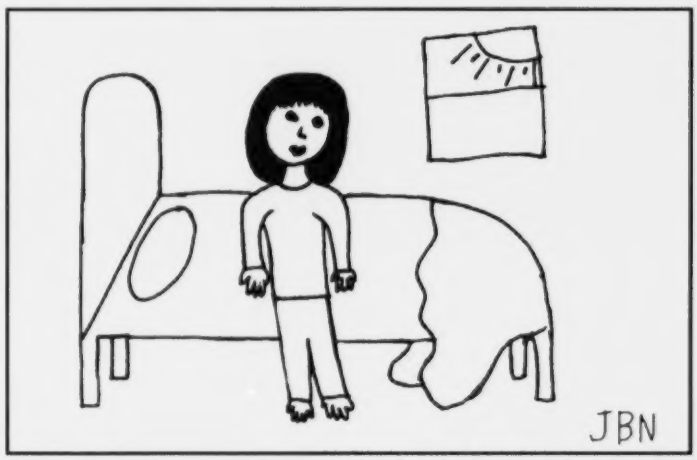


SECTION FIVE

ALLOW YOUR CHILDREN TO MAKE DECISIONS

There are many decisions that must be made every day in the lives of our children. Some of these are:

1. when to get up
2. what to wear
3. whether to eat breakfast
4. what to eat for breakfast
5. what hairstyle to wear
6. which friends to be with
7. what to eat for lunch
8. how much to eat for dinner
9. when to go to bed



Think: What decisions did your children make for themselves today and what decisions did you make for them?

Child made: _____

_____

Parent made: _____

_____

You may believe that there are some decisions that a parent should always make. You may think there are some you could let your children make. It's good to let children make as many decisions as possible. Of course, you'll want to think about their age, how grown up they are, and what you can live with.

It's important that we teach our children decision-making skills. There are many good books about this. You may want to get one. The basic steps are:

1. What is the problem?
2. List several choices.
3. Determine the good and bad things about each choice.
4. Decide which makes sense for you at this time.
5. Make the choice.
6. Do it.
7. Decide if you made a good choice.

So you can get the hang of it, here's an example you can try that is about an adult.

1. Kim's problem is that she has to decide what to wear to a party tonight.

2. Her choices are: shorts and shirt, jeans and a sweatshirt, or a red dress.

3.

shorts and shirt	good bad	comfortable, fits well, cool out of style, legs not shaved
jeans and sweatshirt	good bad	popular, can sit on the floor not fancy enough, pants tight
red dress	good bad	pretty, fits, sort of fancy, have to wear hose, might mess it up

4. She thinks: Since it's cold out tonight, my friends all wear jeans, and my boyfriend likes tight pants on me, I'll wear the jeans and sweatshirt.

5. She gets the jeans and sweatshirt.

6. She gets dressed and goes to the party.

7. (Afterward) She thinks: The temperature was fine, everybody else wore jeans, my boyfriend liked how I looked, and I felt good too. Good decision.

Now think of a problem your child might have. Use the steps to make a decision.

Problem: _____

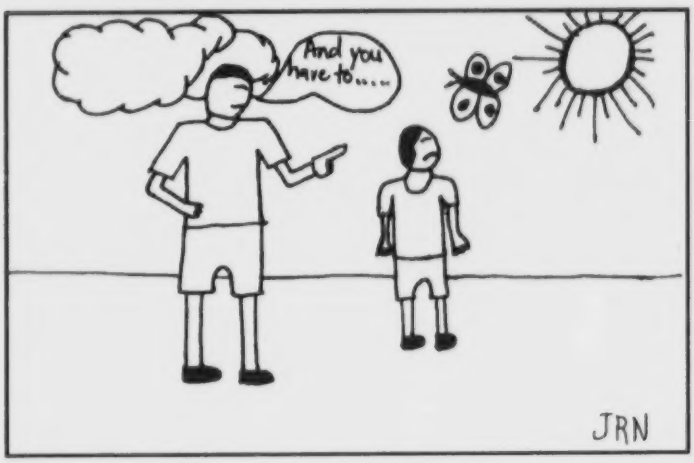
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
   _____
   _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Now that you understand how to do it, teach your children. Once children can make good decisions, they are more responsible, more independent, and have higher self-esteem.

SECTION SIX

WHEN CORRECTION IS NEEDED, DO IT IN A POSITIVE WAY

Keep in mind that all children make mistakes. When we correct our children, we should be sure not to attack them personally. Instead of saying, "You are careless," (because you spilled the milk) say, "Spilling the milk was careless." Instead of saying, "You are mean," (when you grab the ball from your brother) say "Grabbing the ball was a mean thing to do." It may seem like a small point, but it can make a difference. If we keep telling our children that they are careless, mean, stupid, or whatever, two things happen. One is that their self-esteem is lowered. The other is that sooner or later, they come to believe us and they begin to act out. They think, "If she already thinks I'm mean, I may as well be mean. I'll show her what mean is." That's not what we want.



Some parents think that if we tell our children how bad or wrong they are or if we embarrass them in front of their friends, it'll make them do better. I don't think that's true. I think we create angry, resentful children who lose interest in improving or who get worse just to get back at us.

Some mothers or fathers scold on and on....and their kids tune them right out. Let's try to make our comments brief and to the point. Let's talk about what they did and not attack the kids themselves. When we yell at our children, they get defensive, hurt, and they can get mean.

The next time your children have done something wrong, try this. Take three deep breaths, notice, and comment on a couple of things they did that were right. Then, in a calm voice, talk about what they did wrong and tell them how you wish they would do it next time.

Write down examples of the times you try this method and what happens.

Of course, we parents need to correct our children. We must help our children see what is wrong, dangerous, unacceptable, or in poor taste. But, the way we do it is important. Corrections can be done in a positive, loving way. (See the last part of this book on discipline.)

SECTION SEVEN

PRAISE BUT DON'T JUDGE

Children look to us parents for their first ideas about themselves. So, it is important that we parents first show our children that we will love them no matter what they do. It's also good for us parents to say things like these when our children are young: "You're smart," "You're strong," "You're so pretty," "You're funny," "You're good at sports," or "You have a talent for drawing."

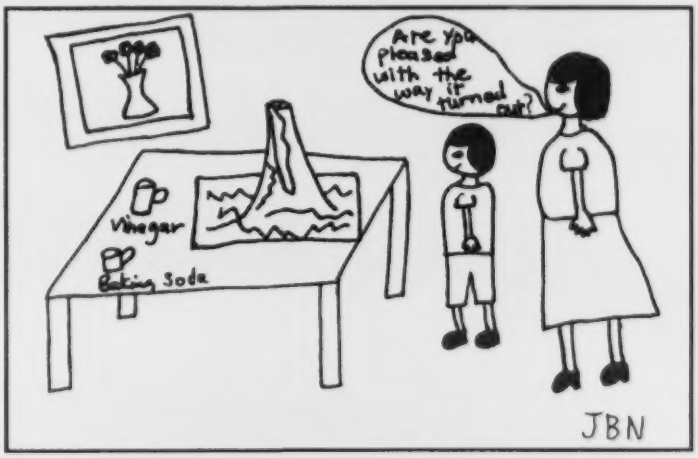
But if we keep that up as they get older, saying things like, "Your painting is the best," "You played a perfect game," "Your book report was fantastic," or "Your dancing was great," we are judging for them. They won't decide for themselves how well or poorly they did. They'll grow older depending on our opinions.

We may also cause them to expect perfection from themselves and from others. Because no one is perfect, that will make their lives more difficult.

If we want our children to become all they can be, at some point (probably late elementary or early middle school), we need to shift gears. We need to make statements that will encourage our children without judging or rating them. For example, with older children, it would be better to say, "Are you pleased with the way it turned out?" "I can see you put a lot of work into that

project." or "Looks like you're proud of what you did."
It could be as simple as your just putting what they did into words such as, "You took the ball all the way down the court," or "You drove through downtown at rush hour today." It sounds kind of obvious, but it lets them know that you noticed. Then they might decide to discuss it with you more.

Praising without judging is not easy, but it's worth the effort because it teaches our children to think for themselves for now and when they are adults. So, try to pay attention to how your children feel and not how you feel. Focus on their self-esteem and not yours.



SECTION EIGHT

HELP YOUR CHILDREN TO FEEL LOVABLE AND CAPABLE

We parents often say or do things that make our children feel unwanted or like they are a bother to us. Sometimes we even give our children the feeling that we'd be happier, have more money, have more fun, or even be more successful without them. It is important that we don't give them those impressions.

We need to let our children know that they are precious to us. We can do that by setting aside times just for them. We can snuggle, talk, read together, play games together, or go places together. We need to take time to enjoy our children and to make it clear that we are glad that we have them. We need to let them know that they are easy to love and that our lives really are better because we have them.

List five things you did this past week that showed your children you love them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

We also need to let our children know that they are capable. Sometimes our words and our actions show that we don't have confidence in them. We tell them they're too little to do things. Because we're in a hurry, we do things for them that they could do themselves. We need to let them know that they are capable by what we do and what we say. If we trust our children to do things around the house, they'll see that we have faith in them. Jobs can be hard so long as they are possible. If we say things like "You sure are good at that!", "I have faith in you," "I didn't know you could do that!", "I thought only ___graders (choose a grade level above theirs) could do that!", or "Wow! You're only ____years old, and you can _____. I'm impressed," they'll believe that they can handle the challenges of their world.

List five things you did this past week that showed your children you think they are capable.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION NINE

ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

One of the most important skills we parents can develop is the ability to communicate well with our children. There are many skills involved in good communication. (See the part in this book on communication.) Here, we're looking at some of the ways that good communication can enhance self-esteem.

It's easy for us parents to be dictators, barking out commands and expecting instant results. But, our children are not little robots. They are not our pets. They deserve our respect. When we want children to do something, we should ask politely. If possible, we should tell them why. We should try to make our requests reasonable and at times that are convenient for our children. How often do we demand that our children do something right in he middle of a TV show? We wouldn't like that and they don't either. We should try to wait for a commercial or tell them to come when the show is over.

When our kids want to tell us something, we should listen. If it's not a good time, we should tell them when to try again. When we need to tell them something, we shouldn't preach. We should try to talk with them instead. We should give our children the same attention and respect we'd give to our friends, co-workers, or even our boss. Think about it.

SECTION TEN

CATCH THEM BEING GOOD

We parents get used to correcting our kids when they're behaving badly. During the time they are behaving, we don't pay attention to them. We just coast until we have to correct again. We complain, correct, and nag too much of the time. It's not fair to them. It's not pleasant for us or our kids.

We need to change the way we think. We need to tell ourselves again and again, "My children do many more right things than wrong."

Instead of noticing only the things our children say and do that are wrong, we should start looking for the things they do that are right. Think positive!

On the lines, list ten things your child did right in the past two days.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

We should let our children know that we notice the good things they do. We can do that by telling them in words, patting them on the back, leaving them a note, putting a gold star on a chart, or whatever works for you.

Try it! Catching them being good is helpful and fun. Once you get used to it, you'll like it. You'll find that by putting all these suggestions to use, your children will grow in confidence and really will be able to say, "I'm glad I'm me."

Suggestions:

Page c:

There are no right or wrong answers, but here are some possibilities: happiness, a job, security, wealth, a husband or a wife, children, spiritual peace, popularity, physical health, mental health, to be a person who helps others, etc.

Page d:

1. Build their self-esteem, teach them values that will help them see what real happiness is, help them learn to cope with disappointment, etc.

2. Help them understand the value of a dollar, allow them to earn money around the house and later in the neighborhood and community, teach them budgeting, encourage them to develop knowledge, creativity and skills that they could use on the job, help them learn about the world of work, encourage them to carry their education as far as possible, etc.

3. Model an appropriate and happy relationship with the person you love, talk and read about relationships, listen when your child wants to talk about relationships, give your children opportunities to spend time with children of all ages, etc.

4. Teach good eating habits, teach exercising and proper sleep, stress that your child avoid drugs, teach your child to deal with frustration and to handle stress, etc.

Page e:

5. Read the Bible *together, attend a church, a synagog or a temple together, discuss spiritual issues, etc.*

6. Model that kind of behavior, discuss it when you see that kind of behavior in others, praise your children when they act in a kind or thoughtful manner, etc.

COMMUNICATION IS CRUCIAL

PART TWO

CHAPTER ONE

COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT

Good communication is important in families for many reasons. It helps develop trust. It builds respect between members of the family. It helps each member of the family feel more confident. Good communication makes it easier to solve the conflicts that come up. It helps families avoid the chaos and arguments caused by poor communication. Parents should use and teach their children good communication skills that will be needed outside the home and in adulthood.

The way people communicate is different in each family. But, no matter how we choose to communicate with our children, we should keep three goals in mind:

1. Exchange messages accurately with our children.
2. Help our children feel valued and respected.
3. Help our children develop into happy and successful adults.

Think about the communications between you and your children in the past week. Was the talk friendly, angry, understanding, effective, confusing? Maybe you didn't even talk to them. Do you wish things could be better around your home? Did poor communication ever cause something to happen that made you mad or confused? Here are some examples: "I thought I heard my sister tell her friend that I was stupid and it really hurt my feelings," or "I told my mom I had basketball practice on Tuesday afternoon after school. She thought it was on Thursday so she got all upset when I didn't come home on the bus," or "My teenage son and I just don't communicate well. We never have. Now I'm worried he might be into drugs. We can't talk about that either."

Communication with our children should be very important to us. We should help our children solve their problems instead of preaching at them, and we should show respect for our children.

Do you think that we families could do a better job of communicating? Of course we could! None of us will ever be perfect parents, but we can all improve. We need to learn skills. We need to take time. We need to have patience.

CHAPTER TWO

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN

SECTION ONE
WHEN YOU ARE THE SENDER

When you are the person talking or sending a message, there are several things to do. Here are six of the most important:

1. Choose a time to talk when there are few distractions.
   Often, we try to talk to our children when the television is on, the radio is too loud, other children are talking, and who knows what else is going on. We need to create a quieter setting or wait until later.

2. Make sure you have your child's attention.
   Children often have trouble tuning in. They may be paying attention to every thing but us. First try calling the child's name. If that doesn't work, gently touch the child on the shoulder. Or gently lift the child's chin until you make eye contact. It's best not to even start sending a message until you are sure you have the child's attention. The child honestly might not hear you. Or, maybe the child hears you but acts like you can't be heard. You can bet, at some point, your child will tell you,"I didn't hear you say that!"

3. Say exactly what you mean.
   Use words that fit what you're trying to say. Don't exaggerate.
   Explain carefully, especially if you're telling your child what you want done.
   Be as clear as you can, especially if you're giving directions.

4. Speak clearly

   It's amazing how often we adults mumble when we are talking with our children....and then we wonder why they don't understand what we say! We need to be sure our hands are away from our mouths and that we pronounce each word clearly. If we don't, we can't expect our children to understand what we've said.

5. Use an appropriate tone of voice.

   Your tone of voice should fit your mood and your meaning. If you are angry, your voice should sound angry. If you are teasing, your voice should sound like you are teasing. If you are sad, your voice should sound sad. If the tone of your voice doesn't match your words, you'll be sending a mixed message and that's confusing.

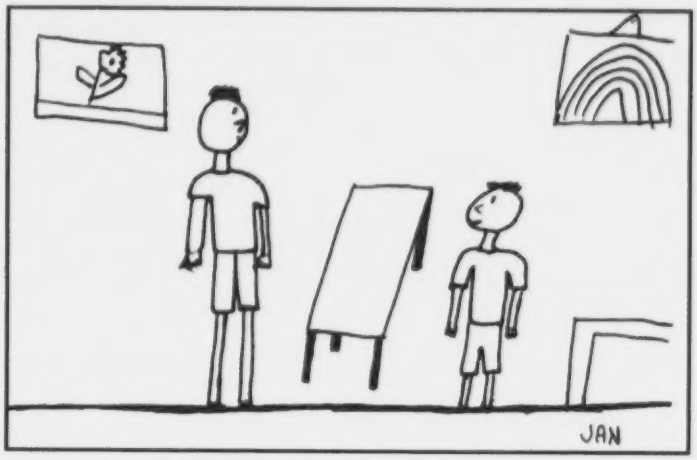
6. Be sure your message has been understood.

   Often we parents tell our kids something. We believe they heard us, understood us, and will do what we asked. But, it's easy for a breakdown to happen. So, we should make sure our message has been received. When children are little, we can say things like, "Now, where did Mommy tell you to put your doll?" When they're older, we can find less childish ways such as, "Let's see, I want to be sure we're together on this...where and when are we meeting?" One other way to handle this with teens is to put the responsibility on ourselves by saying something like, "I'm not sure I made that clear. Could you tell me what you think I said?"

SECTION TWO

WHEN YOU ARE THE RECEIVER

When you are the listener or the receiver, there are several things you should remember to do. Here are seven of them:



1. Look at your child's face.

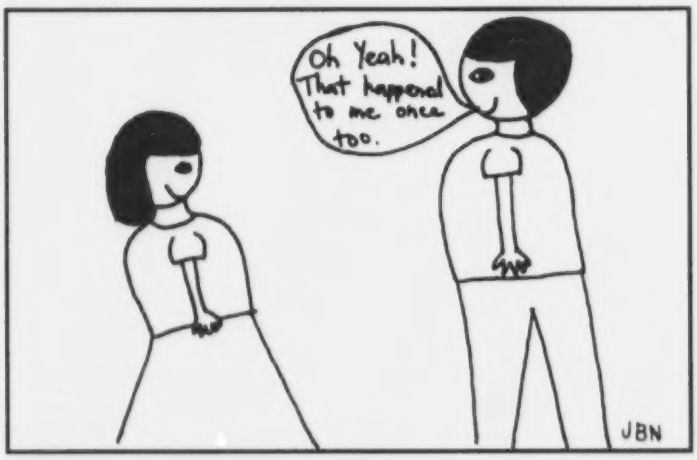
   Your child needs to know that you are interested and that you are paying attention. This is one of my own pet peeves. It really bothers me when I'm talking to someone and and they are looking at something else or even doing something like reading the paper. If I mention it, they'll say, "I'm listening, go ahead." But, it just doesn't feel right. It's that way for our kids too. If your child is trying to tell you something, please stop, get on your child's level, and make eye contact. Not only will you get more effective communication, it will probably take less of your time in the long run.

2. Stay with your child's ideas.

   We need to let our children know that we are interested in what they are saying. Even though our thoughts may be wandering and we may want to say something that is on our mind, it's best to stick with whatever the children bring up. Otherwise we're sending the message that our ideas are more important than theirs, or that their ideas don't matter at all.

3. Don't "me too".

   Many of us have the habit of turning the spotlight on ourselves when some one else is talking. This happens with adults as well as with our children. This is how it works. Someone tells us something that happened to them. We should encourage them to keep talking. Or we should comment on what they're saying. Instead, we think of something similar that happened to us and we start talking about ourselves. It's very easy and to do, but it is not good communicating. It's ok to be reminded of something in our lives, but we should be strong enough to keep those thoughts inside our own heads until another time. Every once in a while, after the other person has finished telling the story, it might be okay to let the other person know that some thing like that has happened to you. It might make them feel better. Remember, though, a good communicator focuses on the person talking.



4. Say something like "uh huh" or "I see".

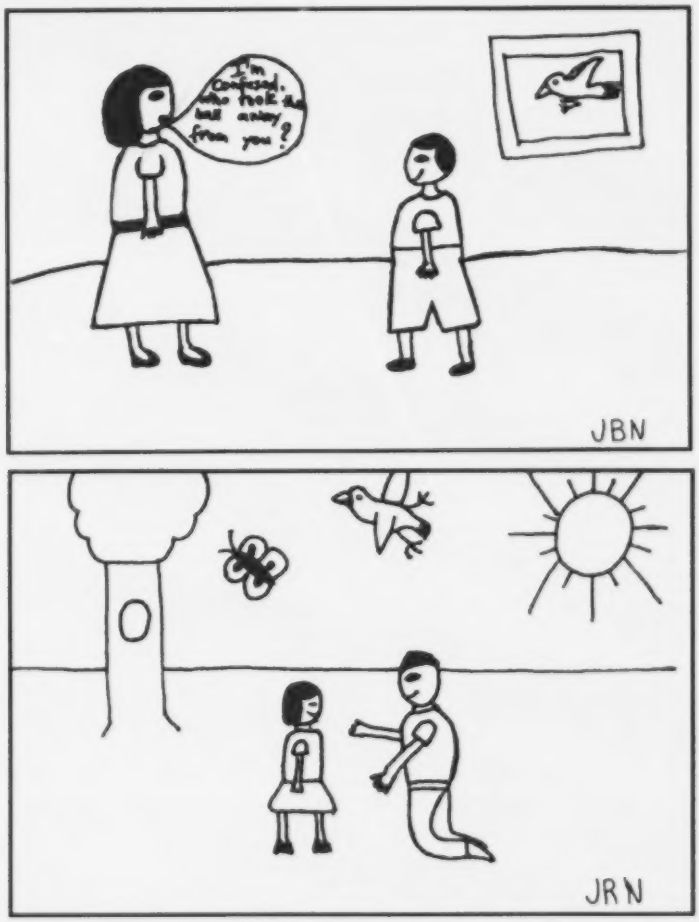
   When we are talking to someone, we want to know that they are with us. Children need to know this too. So, if we say "uh huh" or "I see" every once in a while when they're talking to us, they will keep talking. We shouldn't say it loudly or in a way that interrupts their thinking. It's a quiet way of encouraging. Also, we shouldn't say it very often or it will make us sound like a weird parrot and will stop the conversation. It's kind of tricky to do this well, but it's worth it.

5. Summarize.

   Sometimes a child's story kind of goes round and round and is hard to follow. Sometimes a child's pronouns like "he or she" or "his or hers" get kind of twisted up. So, at times, it's good to check and make sure you are still getting the correct meaning. One way to do this is to summarize. You might do it at the end of your child's tale, or even somewhere in the middle. For instance, if your child is telling you about something that happened on the playground at school today, you might summarize by saying, "So, you were playing with the red ball and Johnny came over and grabbed it out of your hand". If you're right, your child will tell you so. If you're not, your child will correct you. That helps you be sure you're on track. It lets your child know you've been listening and that you understand. It encourages your child to continue.

6. Clarify.

Clarifying is slightly different. You could use it when you're confused about a certain point and want to be sure you understand. You can do it in the middle of a story or at the end. For example, in the same story, you might not be sure whether it was Johnny or Jennifer who took the ball. So you say, "Wait a minute, I'm confused. Was it Johnny or Jennifer who took the ball?" The child would clear up the confusion and then go on. That keeps you with the story. It lets your child know you're really interested. It makes sure you get the story straight.



7. Use good non-verbals.

Another word for "non-verbals" is body language. The important thing is that the way your body looks and moves should match the message you're sending. If you're trying to show that you're interested, you should get down at your child's level, lean slightly toward the child, keep your arms uncrossed, nod your head gently every once in a while (don't bob up and down like a rowboat on a stormy sea!), smile, and touch your child (if it seems comfort able to both of you) using an arm around the shoulders, a pat, or a hug.

SECTION THREE

IF YOUR CHILD IS BOTHERING YOU, EXPLAIN THAT

Remember when we said that trust and respect are important between parent and child? If you have love, respect, and trust, then sending a message that tells how you feel will probably lead to cooperation.

Your message should contain these parts: "When you..", "I feel...", and "Because...". They can be in any order.

For example, let's say a 3 year-old-girl is playing with blocks. Every time her mother puts the blocks in the basket, the child takes them back out again. Rather than to yell at the child or tell her she's a bad girl, the mother could say something like one of these:

"When you take the blocks out of the basket, I feel mad because my friends are coming real soon and I want this cleaned up before they get here."

"I feel mad when you take the blocks out because I don't want my friends to see this place in such a mess."

"Valeria and Demetria are coming, so I want the room cleaned up. I get mad when you keep messing it up."

Notice, the mother is not ordering the child to pick them up and she is not telling her she's a bad girl. She is just explaining the situation and expecting the child to want to please her. This doesn't work every time, but it is far better than the other choices.

We can do it the same way with a teenager who comes in late. The mother could say something like, "When you stay out so late, I feel worried because so many young girls are being attacked these days." Screaming and yelling will hurt how they feel about each other. It probably won't help the problem of the daughter coming in late either.

On the following lines, list ten things your children did in the last week that really bothered you.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Now, fit the three that bothered you the most into this chart:

	When you.....	I feel.....	Because.....
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____

The next time your children do these things, use the three-part sentences to explain your feelings. Give it several chances and see what you think. Is it better than what you were doing?

Write your thoughts down here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

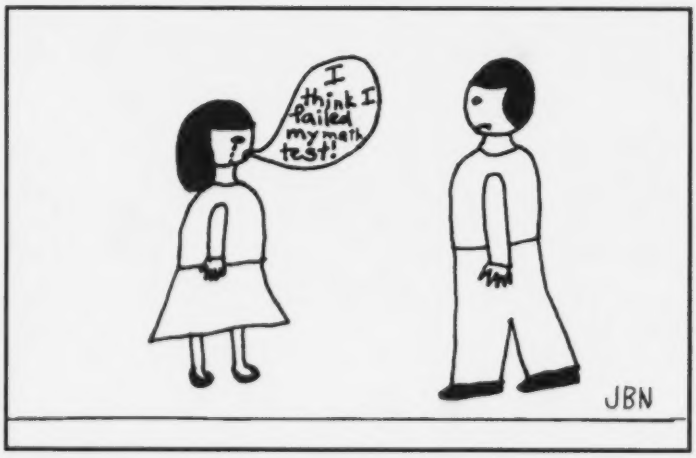
_____

_____

SECTION FOUR

IF IT'S YOUR CHILD WHO HAS A PROBLEM, YOU NEED TO BE A GOOD LISTENER

In the last part, it was the parent who was bothered. Now let's look at the opposite, when it is the child who has a problem. This is when we parents really need to be good listeners. We need to use all the skills listed in Section Two called "When You Are the Receiver." On top of that, we need to try to figure out what feelings our children are having and let them know that we understand.



For example, let's say your twelve-year-old daughter is upset when she comes home from school. Using your best listening skills and watching for her feelings, you decide she's afraid she failed her math test. So, you say something like, "You're worried that you didn't do well on your math test." or "It seems like you're afraid you failed your test." or "I get the idea that you think you did real bad on the test. Am I right?" Any of these would allow her to talk about her feelings. Saying something like, "Oh, don't worry. I'm sure you did fine," will sound pretty dumb to her. How could you know that she did fine, anyway? Launching into a story about the time you failed a math test probably won't help her feel much better. It also won't help her learn from the experience as much as you think it will. Questioning her about whether she studied for the test may be helpful later but not now. Preaching about what the child should have done and how disappointed you are will definitely not help. Remember, your goal is to listen to her and to help her work through her feelings.

Have you ever gotten into a fight with your child when it was time to go home from some fun place and your child did not want to go? You say, "It's time to go," and your child says, "NO! I won't!" You say, "Oh yes you will!" and the battle is on. One possibility is simply to let your child know that you understand by saying something like, "I know you're sorry that playtime is over," or "It's sad when we have to go home." No guarantees, but, when we show our children we understand and care, we can often keep uncomfortable situations from getting worse.

Here are some common situations you can use for practice. Try to come up with a response that will show that you understand the feelings your child might be having. Suggestions can be found on page 50.

1. A mother asks her child to clean up a messy bedroom. The child says, "I'm not going to clean up this dumb room."

   Your answer:_____

   _____

2. A teenage boy is sitting on the front steps and his dad walks up. The son says, "It was my fault that we lost the game. If I had just made that foul shot....."

   Your answer: _____

   _____

3. A teenager is sitting in the kitchen. A parent enters. The child says, "My English teacher, math teacher, and science teacher are all giving us tests tomorrow."

   Your answer: _____

   _____

4. A four-year-old is trying to put a puzzle together. The child says, "I can't do it!"

   Your answer: _____

   _____

5. Your teen admits to you, "My friends are into drugs and they're trying to get me to use them too."

   Your answer: _____

   _____

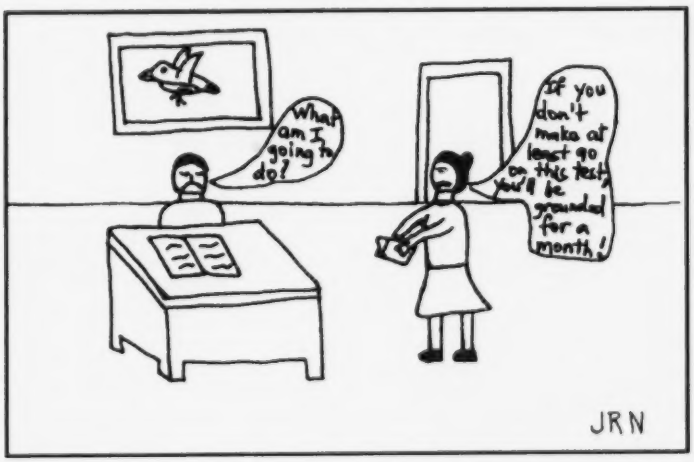
The next three chapters describe some roadblocks to communication. We parents need to try hard not to do these things.

SECTION FIVE

ORDERING OR THREATENING BLOCKS COMMUNICATION

When we order or threaten our kids, they don't want to talk with us. When we force our own solutions on our kids, they resist and probably won't do it anyway. We also prevent them from learning how to solve their own problems. This applies to big issues such as drugs and sex as well as day to day issues. Successful parenting teaches children to stand on their own two feet.

For example, picture a grandmother standing near a very nervous grandson studying for a test. She starts barking orders at him such as, "Sit down and don't get up until I say so," or "You'll learn these history dates if you write them fifty times," or "If you don't get at least 90 on this test, you'll be grounded for a month!" He probably won't study any better and he probably won't make a higher grade on the test. Also, the boy will resent his grandmother won't look to her for help on his studies.



Good communication skills will help the grandmother and grandson get along better. When she understands his point of view and helps him come up with possible solutions, the boy will learn how to solve his own problems.

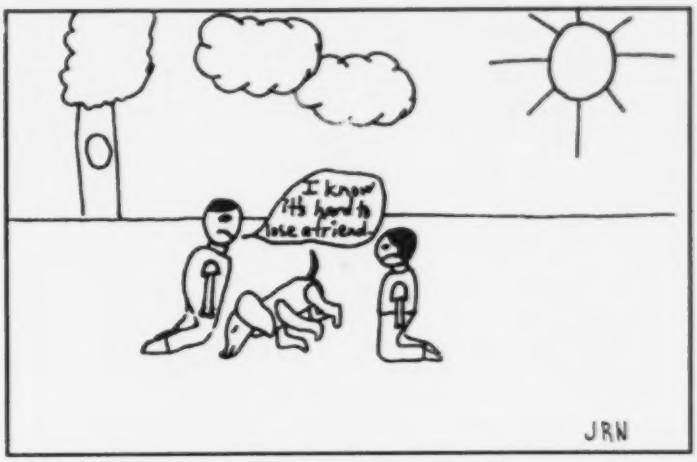
SECTION SIX
TRY NOT TO DENY YOUR CHILD'S FEELINGS

Another roadblock to communication with our children is that we deny their feelings, that is, we pretend their feelings aren't there. Our children will experience many different emotions. Some of them are comfortable and some are not. We love our children and we don't like feeling uncomfortable ourselves. So, we parents often pretend that our children are not uncomfortable. We make jokes or try to talk them out of their feelings. We need to recognize all of the different feelings our children have. We should be willing to talk with them about all those feelings.

A common example is when a child gets angry with a brother or sister and yells, "I hate you!" Parents don't like to hear that. A parent will often say something like, "Oh no, you don't hate your brother (or sister)!" At that moment, the child probably does feel something like hatred and trying to talk the child out of it won't change that. Sometimes parents will add some guilt to the uncomfortable feelings by saying something like, "It's not nice to say you hate your brother (or sister)," or "We're a happy family and we love each other." It's better to figure out the feeling the child is having. Then let the child know you understand. That will do a lot more to cool off the situation.

Another common example is when a child's pet dies. Whether it's a fish, a cat, a dog, or whatever, the child loved it and the loss is real. Thinking it will help, parents say things like, "Oh, it was just a fish," or "I'll get you another cat." The child's response is usually to work harder to show how much it hurts. If we let our children know that we understand how much their pets mean to them, and that we understand how much it hurts when they die, our children will get over it more quickly. It would be better if we parents could say something like, "Oh no. What a shock! I'm so sorry. It hurts to lose your friend."

Here are some situations where a parent might be tempted to deny or skim over the child's feelings. See if you can think of a response that would let your child know you understand. Saying something like that will either lead to a good discussion or you'll find out that all your child needed was for you to understand. See page 50-51 for possible answers.



1. Your child gets a bad grade on a report card.

   Your answer: _____

   _____

2. Your daughter has a fight with her best friend.

   Your answer: _____

   _____

3. Your son's team loses by only one point.

   Your answer: _____
   _____

4. Your child's dog is killed when it's hit by a car.

   Your answer: _____
   _____

5. Your child says you are paying more attention to a younger brother.

   Your answer: _____
   _____

6. Your teenage daughter tells you her boyfriend has been pressuring her to have sex.

   Your answer: _____
   _____

*****

Can you think of some real situations like these from your family's life in the past couple of weeks? Think about what you said. In the next week, try to respond to your children in ways that show that you understand and that you do not deny their uncomfortable feelings. On the lines below, write down the some situations and how you responded.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION SEVEN

AVOID JUDGING, CRITICIZING, BLAMING, SHAMING, RIDICULING, OR NAME-CALLING

Humiliation, or wounding your child's pride, will not get your child to do what you want. It damages self-esteem. It hurts the way you and your kids get along. It will spoil future communication between the two of you.

There are many ways we humiliate our children:

JUDGING-This is when we parents decide whether something our children did was good or bad. For example, if a father overheard a daughter on the phone saying to her girlfriend, "I think when we are eighteen we should go bungee jumping" and he commented, "That's a stupid idea," he is judging.

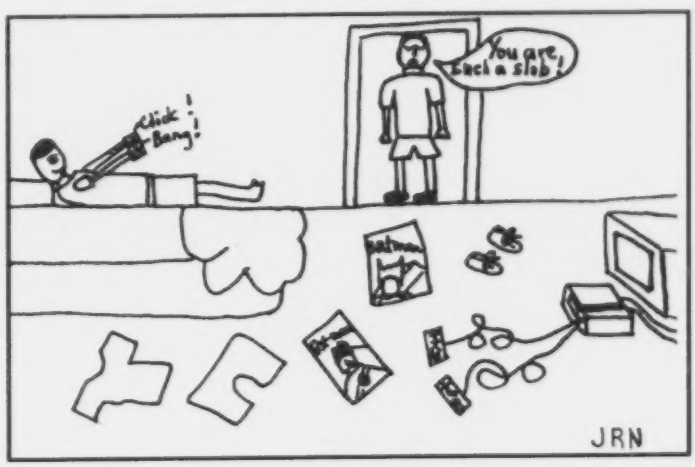
CRITICIZING-This is when we parents say bad things about our kids and their behavior. For example, if a mother is looking at the way a daughter cleaned up the kitchen and she said, "You sure did a lousy job of cleaning up the kitchen."

BLAMING-This is when we parents say that something is the fault of our children without checking it out. For example, if a mother comes into the kitchen and finds a broken plate and right away says to her son, "You broke my plate!"

SHAMING-This is when we try to make our children feel guilty. For example, if a father comes into a room and sees his daughter eating the cookie that was given to her little brother, he might say, "You are so selfish! You should be ashamed of yourself!"

RIDICULING-This is when we parents make fun of our children in ways that make them feel stupid or embarrassed. For example, if a father sees his daughter and her hair is messed up, he might say, "Your hair looks like a mop!"

NAME-CALLING-This is when we parents label our kids with words that are insulting. For example, if a father comes into his teenage son's bedroom, looks around, and says, "You are such a slob!", he would be name-calling.



We parents need to work hard to avoid these roadblocks to communication with our children.

Most of us are not aware of the many times we use the roadblocks described in the last three sections. Try to notice each time a roadblock is used during the next two weeks. It might be in your family, in the family of a friend, or even on television. Recognizing these roadblocks is the first step toward improving in this area.

Everytime you notice a roadblock, make note of it below.

Now that you are aware of what roadblocks to communication are and how very often we parents do them, get yourself in the habit of not doing them.

In the next two weeks, when you start to say something that is a roadblock, force yourself to stop. Put your hand over your mouth or just think "No, no, no." Give yourself credit because that's hard to do. Make a note of the date and what the situation was. Pat yourself on the back for improving your communication skills!

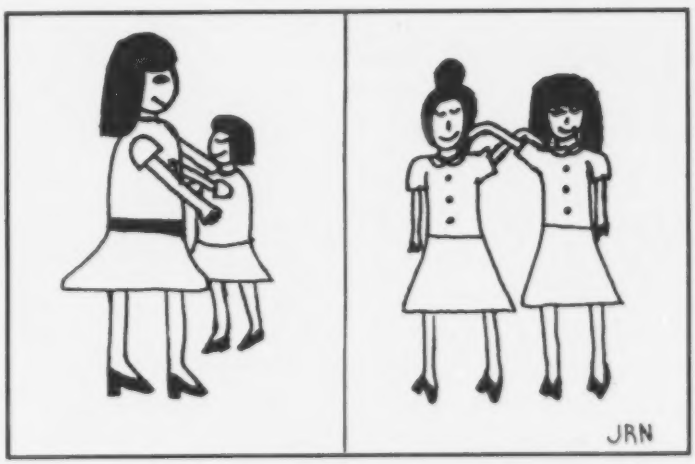
SECTION EIGHT

USE THE SAME COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH YOUR CHILDREN THAT YOU WOULD USE WITH YOUR FRIEND, YOUR CO-WORKER, OR EVEN YOUR BOSS

We parents seem to take our children for granted. We sometimes seem to think that we can push our children aside. We are rude, demanding, or just plain mean just because we're the parents and they're the kids. That shouldn't be. We need to show respect for our children.

In the next couple of weeks, try to notice the ways you communicate with your kids including the tone of your voice. Then notice how you talk to your friends. Is it different? Now notice how you talk to your co-workers. Is that different from the way you talk to your kids? Perhaps the biggest test is how do you talk to your boss? Do you talk to your kids in the same polite, respectful way?

Shouldn't you????



When we establish good communication with our children during their childhood, it brings us happiness and it lays the foundation for a lifetime of closeness.

Suggestions:

Page 40

1. "You get tired of me telling you to clean it up." "It seems silly to you to clean up a room when it's going to get messy again anyway." "You'd rather go out and ride your bike." "You wish you could watch TV instead."

2. "Sounds like you're disappointed that you missed the shot." "You think you should have made that shot." "You're afraid (or "Are you afraid...?) the other guys on the team will blame you," or "You're embarrassed 'cuz it seemed like an easy shot."

Page 41

3. "You're overwhelmed with three tests all in one day." "Sounds like you just don't see how you can be ready for all of them." "Doesn't seem fair?" "Guess it seems kind of hopeless to you, huh?"

4. "You feel mad." "You're really frustrated." "It's hard for you." "It seems like you'll never get it, huh?" "You wish you could do it."

5. (It's probably best to resist the temptation to start preaching.) "It's hard to know what to do. You want to keep your friends, but you don't really want to get into drugs." "You're worried that...." "You think if....."

Page 44

1. "You're disappointed you made a low grade." "It's embarrassing to make a low grade."

2. "You're angry that she said those things about you." "It's lonely without your friend."

Page 45

3. "Wow, what a disappointment!" "Gosh, and you guys really gave it your best!"

4. "I know you just can't believe it!" "This is probably the worst thing that has ever happened to you."

5. "You wish I would spend more time playing with you." "You're jealous of your little brother because I spend more time with him."

6. "It's hard to know what to do." "You love him but you don't really want to have sex yet...it's confusing."

DISCIPLINE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

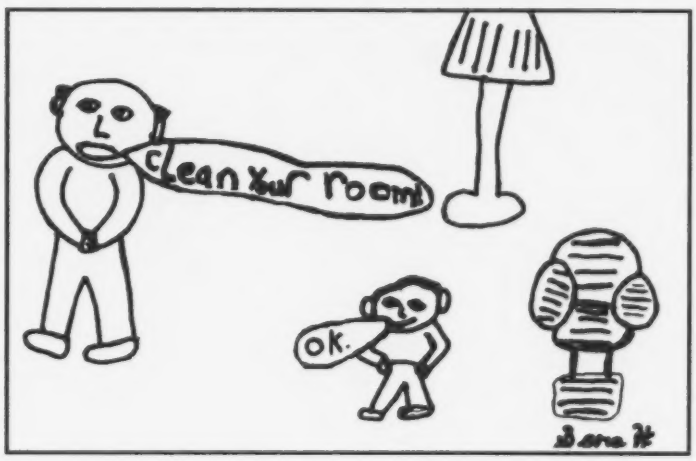
PART THREE

CHAPTER ONE

WHY DISCIPLINE IS IMPORTANT

Parenting is tough. Very tough. What is the most difficult thing about parenting for you? There are many possibilities. Here are some of them: getting your children to behave, fearing their possible involvement with drugs, sex, or the law, worrying about how they'll be when they grow up, being tired all the time, paying for everything, feeling upset so much of the time because your children won't cooperate, feeling your family doesn't appreciate what you do, and hating all the arguments.

It's hard to fix all those problems, but imagine a home where your children would behave the way you want them to. Would that make your life happier and easier? Probably would!



Have you had days when you felt it was just hopeless and you were ready to give up? Probably have!

When children run the house, parents are upset, poor choices are made, and routine turns to chaos. Also, children have an unsettled feeling that parents don't really care about them. Children want approval, love, and security. They want the safety of limits and controls. They'll constantly push at these limits to make sure they're firm. They want to know that parents are in control, and that they're safe.

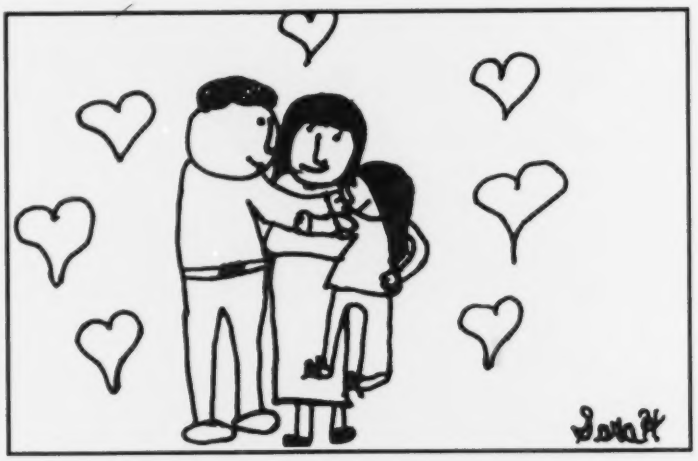
Parents want kids to behave the right way so that life will be peaceful and so children will grow up to be happy, successful adults.

Discipline is teaching our children to have self-control so they'll be able to get along with other people. It's not just parents deciding which punishment they're going to use! And it's not easy!

Do you think we parents could do a better job with discipline? Of course we could! None of us will ever be perfect parents, but we could all improve.

There are lots of methods of discipline that will work. Different things work with kids at different times. But nothing works every time or for too long. All families are different. One difference is whether it's a single parent family or if two parents are there. Single parents have to deal with it all alone and that's tough. But, in homes with both parents, agreement on ways to discipline is sometimes impossible. That's tough too! There are lots of methods of discipline that will work. Each parent and each child is different, situations change, and children change as they grow up. Parents need to be ready to use a variety of different discipline techniques.

Every parent must do what he or she feels is right. But, let's be sure that we know what we're doing. All discipline should be based on LOVE. Let's be sure we show respect for our children and we always try to build their self-esteem.



In Part One, you learned about self-esteem. Take a moment to think about the connection between discipline and self-esteem.

Here are some thoughts on that: When children feel good about who they are, they're happier and easier to be with. If we are always trying to improve our children's self-esteem, we'll be a better and nicer parents. The kinds of things we do to try to improve our children's self-esteem will also improve the way we get along with that child.

Some ways we can enhance our children's self-esteem are: skillfully listening to our children (see Part Two-Communication), celebrating their successes, encouraging their talents, and spending as much positive time as possible with our children.

So, discipline is important for today and for tomorrow. It is one of the greatest challenges in parenting.

In the next chapter, we'll present several suggestions on how to discipline children.

CHAPTER TWO

SOME SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO DISCIPLINE CHILDREN

SECTION ONE

LET'S SHOW RESPECT FOR OUR CHILDREN

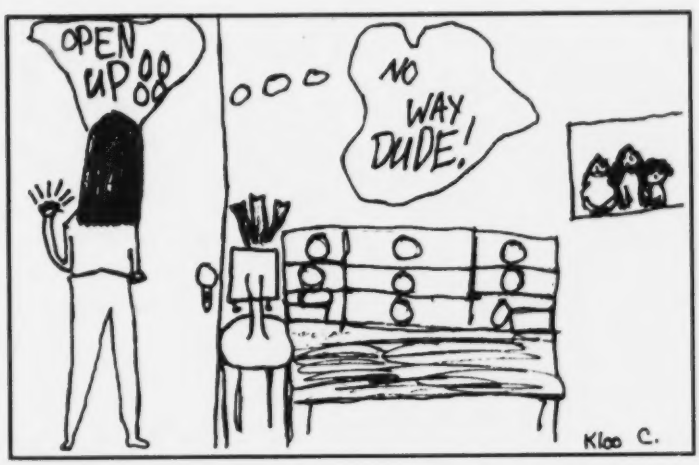
Do you remember your own parent barking one order after another at you such as "Make your bed!" "Get dressed!" "Brush your teeth!" "Clean up the bathroom!"? It probably made you mad or made you feel something like a pet. Maybe it showed you that parents can order kids around without showing respect. It did not teach the lessons that would have helped you.

It's important that we find as many ways as possible to show respect for our children.

A key way to show respect is to ask a child if it is all right to go into his or her things to get something we need. Many parents just go into drawers, closets, backpacks, and so forth as if they belong to the parent instead of the child.

Even small children want and deserve privacy. So, it's best if we parents don't burst into their rooms. We should remember it's their place, not ours. It's best if we can get into the habit of knocking at their door even when they're little. It shows respect. That makes them feel important. It also models the way adults should show respect for each other.

One way is to ask them what they would like to eat. It's not always possible to buy the things they want. It's pretty tough to please everyone on the same night. Maybe we can work out ways to please each child some of the time.



Remember, discipline is teaching. It's teaching that will make life smoother today and will help your children grow into the kind of adults you want them to become. Asking our children how they feel about a possible activity or asking them if they want to spend time with certain people are other ways to show respect. It lets them know we value their opinions.

It's important that we parents take our children seriously, listen to them, and treat them as individuals. This shows respect and teaches them to respect others. That's a great big part of what discipline is all about.

Another way of showing respect for our children is for us to try to understand why they misbehave. One reason children disobey is that it gets them what they want. They find out that if they nag enough, parents will probably give in. We parents often pay more attention to children who are doing wrong things than children who are doing right things. It's important to understand why children do the things they do because it helps us know what kind of discipline to use in order to teach them what they need to know.

SECTION TWO

ESTABLISH CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

One of the most important parts of successful discipline is successful communication. (See Part Two of this workbook.) Often, it's the parent who causes the problem because the rules, requests, and expectations are not made perfectly clear. We need to be sure we make them clear for two reasons: First, we want things to work out right. And second, sure as the world, our kids will try to weasel out of trouble, claiming that we never told them something. We need to be sure that there's no way they can claim this.

So, we need to make sure we have explained exactly what we expect, exactly what will happen if our children do what we want, and exactly what will happen if they do not do what we want. Good communication is the basis for good discipline.

SECTION THREE

NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

One very effective method of discipline is to let natural consequences occur. That means allowing children to live with the results of what they did. (Of course, we wouldn't do it if the consequence could be very dangerous.) Sometimes it's pretty easy for a parent to do and sometimes it's very difficult.

Ever since their infancy, we've been there to pave the way and to protect our children. It's uncomfortable for us to see our children struggle. So, we often rescue them. We want to make our children's lives easier than ours have been.

When we do that, we often take away the very spark that allowed us to meet our challenges. Let's be strong.

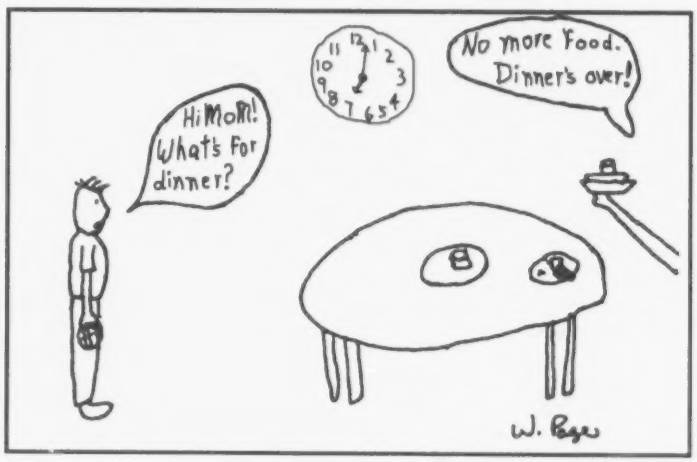
Let's look at a couple of examples.

A. Your ten-year-old son calls you from school because he has forgotten his math homework and he wants you to bring it to him. If this is the first time, or if there is an understandable reason, or if it's an emergency, you might decide to take it to him if you're able to.

But, remember, by bringing him his paper, you've rescued him. You've probably given him the idea that he doesn't have to remember his homework the next time. If you let him face the natural consequences of his actions, he will learn to be responsible. Self-discipline.

B. Your teenage son stayed at the park too late playing basketball. So, he comes in late for dinner. It is the third time this week. You could welcome him, get his plate of food, and give him lots of attention. If you do that, you'll be sending him the message that what he did was okay.

But, if you tell him how late he is, and you give him scraps or no dinner at all, he'll learn that he'd better get home on time. Natural consequences teach self-control.



Here are some examples for you to try: Read the problem. Then write a possible natural consequence. Turn to page 85 for suggestions.

1. Your child leaves a dirty uniform on the floor and it doesn't get cleaned in the weekly laundry.

Natural consequence:

_____

_____

2. Your eighteen-year-old spends all his money and has nothing left over for the fair.

Natural consequence:

_____

_____

3. Your preschool or school-age child angrily throws her toy down and says, "I don't want this stupid thing."

Natural consequence:

_____

_____

4. Your child in either elementary or middle school plays outside all afternoon and then doesn't have time to do homework before bedtime.

Natural consequence:

_____

_____

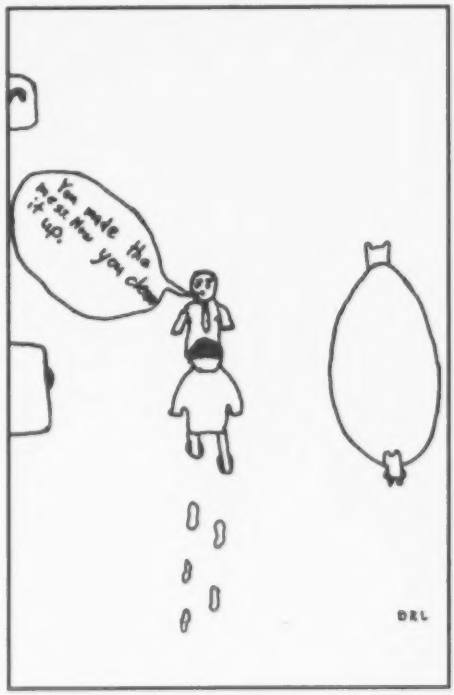
SECTION FOUR

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Logical consequences happen when parents decide on a certain action that fits what the child did (or might do) that's wrong. Logical consequences don't happen naturally. The parents do them because they believe they will teach a lesson. It's best if parents explain what will happen ahead of time, but that is not always possible.

Let's look at some examples:

If a child breaks or destroys something, the logical consequence is that the child has to clean it up, fix it, or replace it, if that's possible. That might take some time or it might take money. The child could pay you the value of the item if money has already been saved. The child might be getting an allowance. Or you might let the child earn money doing chores. It would be better if the child could actually go to the store and buy the replacement. It will take some time and energy on your part.



Remember, disciplining is teaching, and it's not easy!

You catch one of your children eating the dessert you had planned for tonight. A logical consequence would be to say, "No dessert for you tonight." Another logical consequence would be to keep that child from having desserts for a certain length of time such as a week.

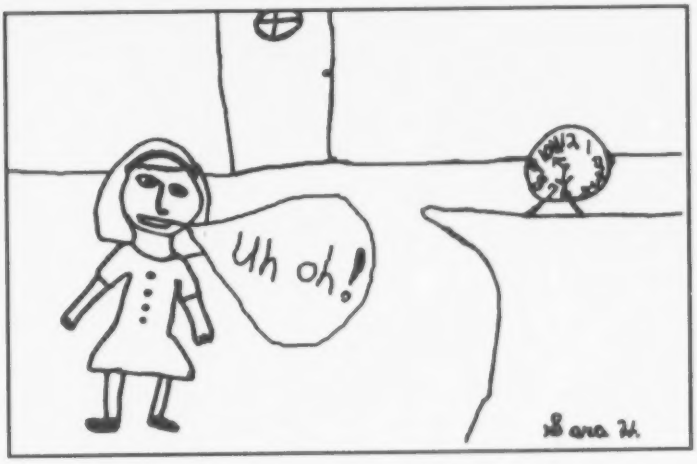
If your preteen or teenage children come in late, there are many logical consequences you could try:

1. They would have to stay at home for some length of time.

2. The next night they would have to come in earlier by the amount of time that they were late. For example, if they were due home at ten o'clock and they came in at ten thirty, then the next night, they would have to come in at nine-thirty.

3. They would not be allowed to go out with the same friends for some length of time.

4. They would not be allowed to go to the same place for some length of time.



Parents have to decide what length of time each consequence will last. Most of the time one week is long enough.

Here are some examples for you to try. Read the situation, then write your idea on the line, and then look at the suggestions on page 86.

1. Your six-year-old left snack wrappers and a glass on the floor in front of the TV after you've told him to be sure to put them away.

Logical consequence:

_____

_____

2. Your thirteen-year-old leaves his new bike out in the yard overnight.

Logical consequence:

_____

_____

3. Your four-year-old leaves her toys all over the kitchen floor after you asked her three times to put them away.

Logical consequence:

_____

_____

SECTION FIVE

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

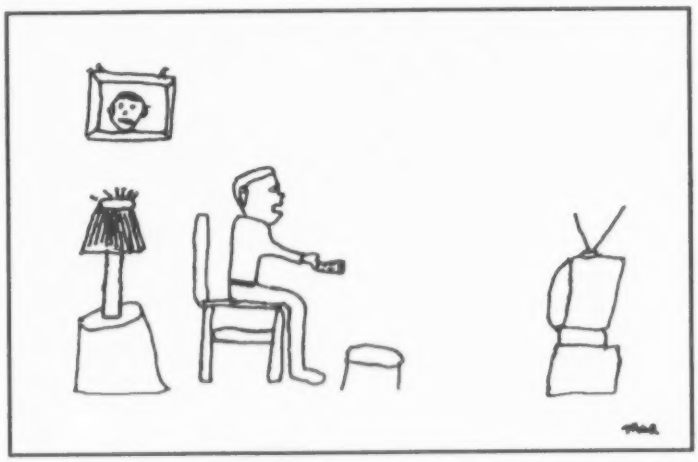
Behavior modification is another method of discipline. It is based on the idea that if people act in a certain way, and then, very soon after that, they get something they like, they'll act that way more often. So, if we want children to behave in a certain way, we make sure they get something that pleases them when they do it right.

First, let's discuss the various kinds of things that will please children enough that they will work for them.

The simplest thing we can do is praise them when they do something right. For example, if your son cleared the table, you might say, "You cleared the table." or "Thank you for clearing the table."

Children also like smiles, hugs, or kisses. These just plain feel good.

Children like privileges that don't even cost us money. We could let them stay up late, stay out late, have a friend come over, watch a special TV show, or have someone read them a story.



Of course, children do like things that cost us money such as toys, sweets, or going to a show or game. Most kids will also try hard when you offer cold, hard cash.

The important thing is that we offer something to our children that they will try their best to get.

Most of the time, offering our children something good will convince them to behave. Sometimes parents believe they also need to punish when their children do the wrong things.

Three of the most common punishments are loss of privileges, spanking, and time out.

LOSS OF PRIVILEGES

This is when we take away some of the nice extras in our children's lives such as television, desserts, bicycles, videos, or sporting equipment.

We might also ground them to the inside of our home or to some certain area outside. We could also keep them from seeing their friends. We could keep them from going to a ball game or a movie.

Natural and logical consequences (see previous sections) are losses of privileges.

SPANKING

Spanking is used by many families. There are several things that parents should consider when they decide if they're going to use spanking as their main method of discipline.

Spanking will probably not do what we want. While it may stop the problem we're having at that time, as soon as we parents are not looking, our children will probably misbehave again. We parents are controlling our children instead of teaching our children self-control.

When we use physical force as our number one form of discipline, we may be teaching our children to hurt others. At some point, we might even abuse our own children.

When children are spanked constantly, they think their parents are not fair. These children often fight with their parents. They plot ways to get back at their parents. They also sneak around their parents. Using spanking as your main method of discipline is likely to lower your child's self-esteem and that causes more problems. (See Part One)

There is no way to cause pain and increase self-esteem because as we spank a child, we tell them they're bad and they come to believe it. If we spank a child, and do it regularly, we make the child very angry. Then they take that anger out on others around them. Children do more of what we do than what we say.

If we parents spank, we're playing with fire. And both we parents and our children might be hurt. Why take those risks when there are so many other safe and effective ways to discipline?

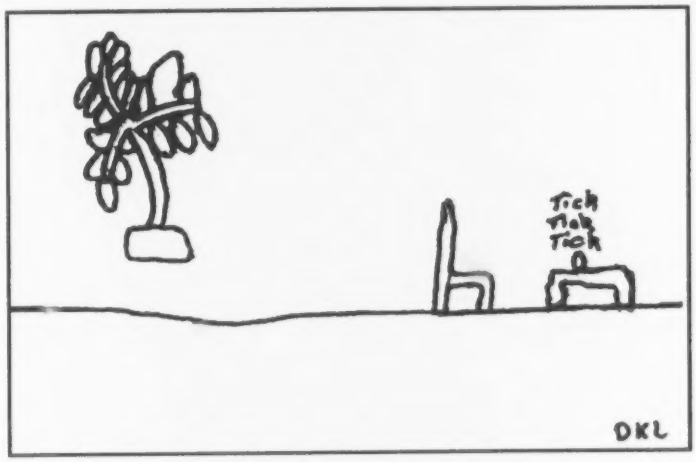
TIME OUT

For many people, time out has been effective. Others say they have tried time out and it didn't work. It's true that some things don't work with some children at some times. Before we parents give up on the idea of using time out, let's make sure we're using it correctly.

Time out does not mean sending our children to their rooms for long periods of time, like for the rest of the afternoon. That may have its place as a disciplinary tool, but it is not time out. Time out is supposed to be a short break from what our children are doing wrong. It also is a break from the strong feelings that our children are showing. Besides being a break, time out gives children a chance to think about what they just did.

We want to teach our children that people must be in control before being with other people. If a child has "served the time" for the original wrongdoing but continues to misbehave, suggest that the child go to a private place to calm down. We can let the child decide when to come out or we can decide when the child is ready.

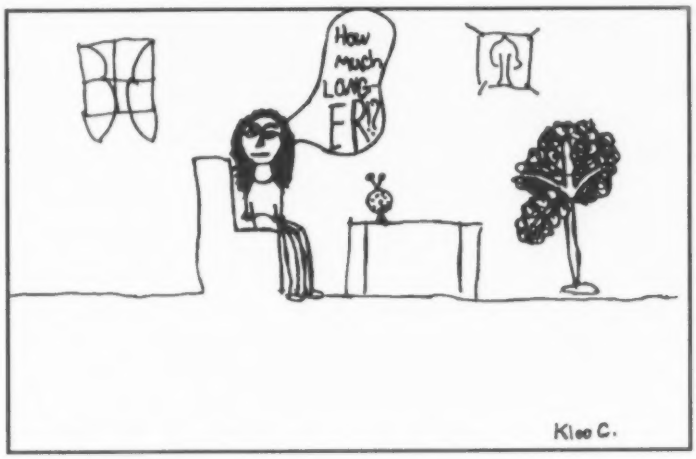
The time out location should be a boring, quiet place where there is no traffic. A chair and a timer are needed.



First, at a time when the child is not in trouble, the parent should explain the process. This is important.

Here are the basic steps, written in the way that you would tell your child:

1. I will take you to the time-out place.
2. You will sit down in the chair.
3. As soon as you get quiet, I'll start the timer.
4. If you make noise, I'll start the timer again.
5. If you get up, I'll start the timer again.
6. When the timer rings, I'll come. I'll let you out.
7. If you're not yet in control, I'll send you someplace until you're calm enough to come out.



Time out is recommended for children from 2 to 12 years old. Sometimes we'll have to start the timer several times before the child finally decides to settle down. Don't give up! It will work if we're willing to stick it out. It is important that we parents remain patient, calm, firm, and matter-of-fact.

SECTION SEVEN

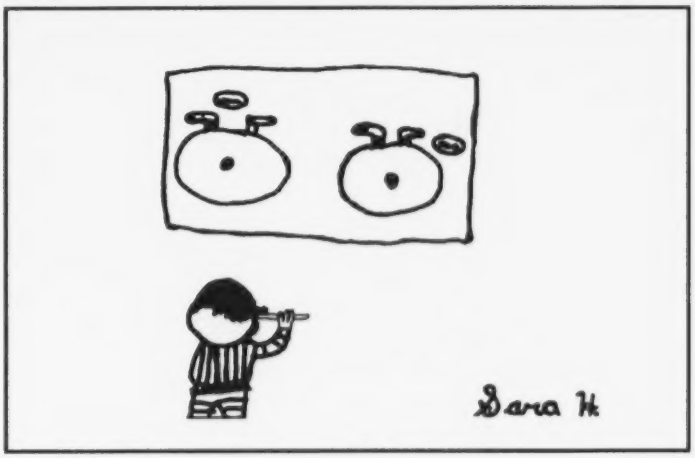
USING CHARTS TO KEEP TRACK OF EVERYDAY EXPECTATIONS

Another way to use behavior modification is to use charts to keep track of everyday expectations. These charts can be very simple and use pictures so that a preschooler can understand them. They can be typed in words and include more grown-up items so they would be right for a high school student. (See the last page in this book.)

List each of the things you expect your child to do during a day's time. Keep it as simple as possible. Then make boxes for each day of the week. Some parents may think it's best that they mark the chart. Some may think they can let their children do that. Any way to mark the boxes is fine. Most people stick on stars or stickers or make checks with a pen.

It's a good idea to build in something good the children will get if they do a certain number of things right. Parents need to decide how many it will take. That depends on the age of the child. It depends on how hard the things are to do. It depends on the help the child gets from you. It also depends on how well the child was doing before you started the chart.

For example, let's say you have a four to five-year-old son and you want him to be responsible for doing these five things per day: make bed, brush teeth, get dressed, clear his dinner dishes, and get pajamas on.



That's not everything you hope he'll do in a day, but it's a good beginning. In the seven days of a week there are thirty-five opportunities for stickers, stars, or check marks. Let's say that just before you start this system you see that he is doing about eighteen of these each week. Set the goal at twenty for the first week. If he gets twenty stickers, stars, or checks on his chart, he'll get something he wants. It could be a trip to the park or a candy bar.

If he makes the goal, the next week, make the goal twenty-two. You can keep increasing the number he'll need until you're happy. Remember, we parents can't expect perfection.

Another way to do it is to offer coins for each marker on the chart. Then the child can trade the coins in for something or he could buy something.

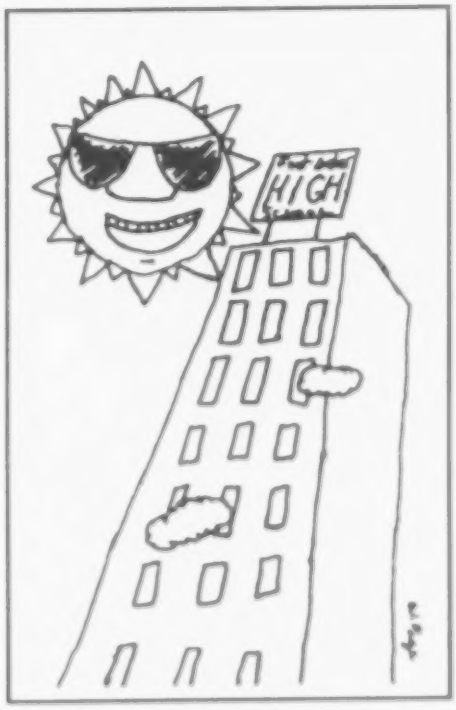
Charts should be placed in a place that's easy to see such as in the child's room or on the refrigerator. During the week, praise the child for all the things that are being done right. Behavior modification for changing a specific behavior is difficult for parents to do, but, it will work if parents are willing to put in time, energy, and consistent effort.

SECTION SEVEN

IMPROVING A SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR

It's easy for us parents to just clump it all together and say, "My child is acting bad." But, we can't fix everything all at once. So, the first step is to pinpoint just one problem. It may be a problem you're having at home such as putting clothes in the dirty clothes basket or fighting with a brother or sister.

It may be a problem at school such as turning in math homework or paying attention in English class. Parents should be sure we talk with our children's teachers to find exactly what the specific school problems are. It doesn't work to try to fix everything at once.



It may be helpful to use a chart to keep track of your plan and your child's progress. (See the upper right corner of the last page in this book.)

Stars, stickers, or checks made with a pen can be used on the charts.

Here are the steps to follow:

1. Target one problem. Start a chart.

2. Watch your child for one day (or whatever period of time makes sense to you) to determine how often the child is doing the problem behavior before you start working on it. Write that on the chart.

3. Decide how often you're going to check on how your child is doing. You want your child to earn a star. So check often enough that your child doesn't have time to misbehave inbetween.

   That might be as short as every ten minutes if the problem is really bad or happens a lot. It might be every hour. It could be once in the morning, once in the afternoon, and once in the evening. If your child is in school, it might make sense to check before school, after school, and after dinner. Write that on the chart.

4. Have a talk with your child. Explain the plan to the child.

5. Decide together what your child will get and how many stars the child has to get to be rewarded. Write it on the chart.

6. You might decide to just use rewards or you might decide to add a punishment if your child doesn't behave the way you want. If you do add the punishment, you be the one to decide on which one you might use (See Section Five on Behavior Modification). Write it on the chart.

Let's practice how to change specific behaviors. Put down the name of the child and the exact problem you're having.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Now, pick just one of those five problems and go through the six steps listed on the previous page. Once you have your behavior modification plan ready, you may begin. It may take a while before you start to see results, but stick with it. It will be worth the effort.

MY BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION PLAN

Make a chart like the one in the back of this book.

1. Target one problem:_____

2. How often is it happening?_____

3. How often will you check?_____

4. Talk with your child._____

5. Rewards?_____

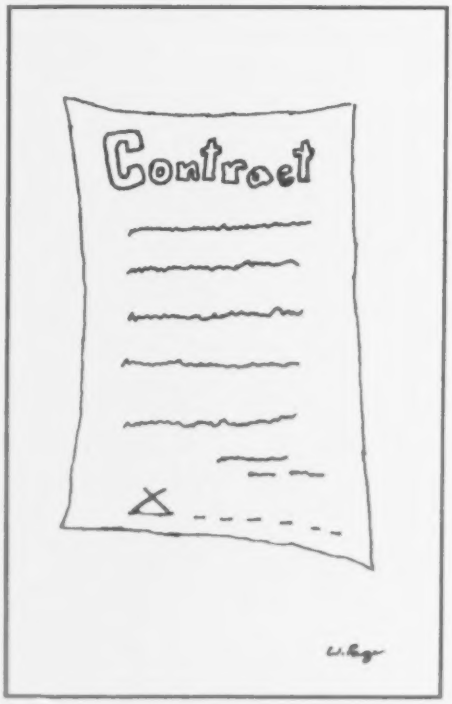
6. Punishments?_____

SECTION EIGHT

SETTING UP A CONTRACT

Another discipline technique is to use contracts. These are agreements between the parent and the child to help the child learn to do something better.

There is no specific form a contract has to take. Each parent can set it up to suit the situation.



The contract simply says what the child agrees to do, what the parents agree to do, what the time frame is, and what the child will get if the contract is successfully completed. It's important that the child really wants the reward. It's also important that the parents keep their end of the bargain because it is also a lesson in keeping promises.

Can you think of some problems that you and your children can make a contract about? Make sure the problems are clearly explained and that you're willing to keep your end of the bargain. Write your ideas below.

SECTION NINE

FAMILY MEETINGS

Family meetings are a good time to share ideas, show respect for each other, and solve problems that affect the whole family. Some of the topics families discuss are meals, laundry, or vacation plans. Some others are use of the family car, rules about friends in the home, or privileges children may have. Usually, it's best if the children are at least eight years old. Some children may be ready earlier.

Probably the toughest part of having a family meeting is finding a time when all members of the family can attend!

There are many ways to run the meeting. In some families, a parent is always in charge. Some families have a different member of the family take charge each week.

Some families keep a running list of concerns during the week and then discuss them at the family meeting. Some families don't plan ahead, but just bring up ideas during the meeting. Some families make sure every member gets the chance to bring up one concern at each meeting, while some families may only talk about one idea per meeting.

There are no right or wrong ways to have a family meeting. The important thing is that the family meeting works to open up communication and to solve problems that come up in families.

Why don't you plan a meeting for you and your family?

SECTION TEN

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT TEMPER TANTRUMS

Temper tantrums are common in children from around 16 months to around 5 years. They are caused by hunger, fatigue, a change in schedule, or emotional overload. Children these ages have a hard time putting how they feel into words, so they explode.

Remember that all other parents have been through this before, so try not to be embarrassed. It's a normal part of childhood and of being a parent.

Sometimes it's possible to prevent a tantrum from happening if you plan to do things when children are at their best. For example, don't go to the grocery store when your child is hungry. It's best if you don't take your child visiting just before naptime. It's hard today because we all are on the run, but, if possible, keep to a schedule when your children are young.

If your child has reached the level of full-blown tantrum, you are probably not going to be able to stop it no matter what you do. Try not to be concerned with your own embarrassment and do what's right for your child. Be calm. Make sure your child is safe and let it run its course.

SECTION ELEVEN

SOME HELPFUL HINTS

1. Lighten up. Make jokes. Get creative. Be silly. Pretend. Sometimes the best way to get them to do what you want is to play around and have fun. Sometimes we get too serious. Just the other day when my boys didn't want to write thank you notes, I became a beeping robot dictionary at their service. Sounds silly but it was better than a show-down. And, it worked.

2. Don't expect your children to do what you want right away. To get them moving, try counting. Counting down works better than counting up. If you always say zero at the end, they'll know what to expect. Decide where to start so you'll give them a fair amount of time. We all seem to do this so they'll have a chance, but try not to slow down your counting at 4....3.....2.....1 or go to 1, 3/4, 1/2, 1/4, and so forth. That tempts your kids to disobey. Be sure they know what will happen if they don't make it.

3. Remember that even though some days seem very long, the time you'll have with your children is really quite short. Love them. Show them you're glad you have them. What memories would you like to have about their childhood thirty years from now when they're all grown up? Then go make those memories today!

CHAPTER THREE

PARENTING STYLES

Most experts see three different parenting styles. They are:

1. The parent is strict, tells the children what to do and what not to do, and doesn't think very much about the child's feelings or opinions.

2. The parent thinks a lot about feelings and opinions, doesn't give a whole lot of guidance, and may not teach responsibility.

3. The parent is strict when needed, teaches responsibility, gives direction, gives a lot of support, and shows respect for the child's feelings.

What are the advantages for the child of each parenting style?

_____

_____

_____

What are the advantages for the parent of each parenting style?

_____

_____

_____

Each parenting style causes children to grow up to be a certain kind of adult. What kind of adult is made by each of the three styles?

_____

_____

_____

Which style are you? Do you think you should change parenting styles?

_____

_____

Please see page 86 for discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOME SITUATIONS FOR YOU TO TRY

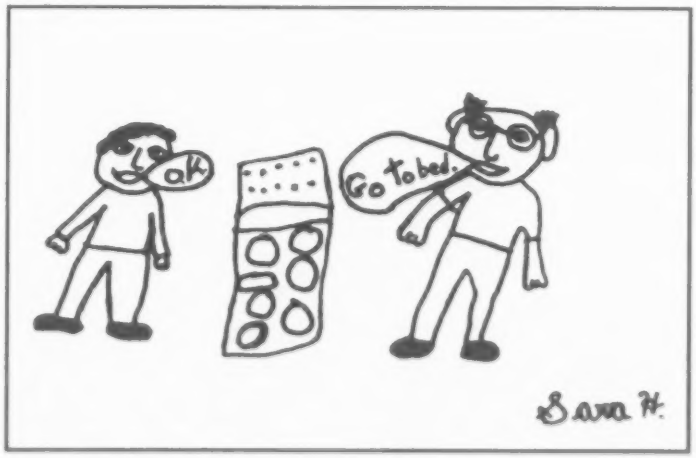
Now that you have finished this part on discipline, you should have some ideas of how to handle problems that might come up in your family. Here are some common situations. Based on what you've learned, decide what you would do in each one. There are no right or wrong answers. Many different ways might work. Think through each one carefully and then write your answer on the line.

SITUATION ONE: A GRANDFATHER IS TRYING TO GET HIS GRANDSON TO BED. THE GRANDSON IS NOT PAYING ATTENTION. HE IS TRYING TO STAY UP LATER. THE GRANDFATHER HAS ASKED OVER AND OVER. WHAT COULD THE GRANDFATHER DO?

_____

_____

Please see page 87 for suggestions.



SITUATION TWO: A MOTHER COMES INTO HER DAUGHTER'S ROOM AND FINDS IT VERY MESSY. THE DAUGHTER ARGUES WITH HER MOTHER ABOUT CLEANING IT UP. WHAT COULD THE MOTHER DO?

Please see page 88 for possible answers.

SITUATION THREE: A MOTHER GOES IN FOR A PARENT CONFERENCE WITH HER SON'S TEACHER. THE TEACHER TELLS THE MOTHER THAT THE BOY IS FORGETTING HIS HOMEWORK, DOESN'T FINISH HIS CLASSWORK, AND DAYDREAMS. BESIDES THAT, HE TALKS TO HIS NEIGHBORS, AND HE GOT INTO A FIGHT ON THE PLAYGROUND. WHAT COULD THE MOTHER DO?

Please see page 89 for possible answers.

Suggestions:

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1. *Child doesn't play in the next game or plays wearing a dirty uniform.*

2. *Child has to stay home while his family and friends go to the fair.*

3. *You take the toy away.*

4. *Child goes to bed on time, goes to school without homework, and faces the consequences from the teacher; child goes to bed on time and then has to get up early to do homework.*

Suggestions:

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1. *Take his snack privileges away. Make him keep the TV room clean. Don't let him watch TV. The parent should decide how long each of these needs to last.*

2. *The bike is locked up for awhile. He must take care of the bike by washing it, drying it, and maybe waxing it.*

3. *Watch her to be sure that she does it this time. Put the toys in a box and tell her she can't have them back until tomorrow.*

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The parent in example #1 might love the child very much but isn't allowing the child to think. One risk is that those children might become followers. They might follow people who will get them into trouble.

The parent in example #2 might have children who are lazy, who are self-centered, who lose things, who lie, and who don't care if they're late. They are so used to having their own way that they become very upset when they can't have their own way.

The parent in example #3 should have children who are well-behaved, have high self-esteem, show "good sense", and are pleasant to be around.

GETTING A GRANDSON TO GO TO BED

Natural Consequences-Let him get himself to bed. The next day he may get in trouble for not having his things ready for school. He won't get enough sleep and will feel tired the next day.

Logical Consequences-If he goes to bed late tonight, he'll have to go to bed that much earlier tomorrow. If he doesn't get to bed on time, he's not allowed to read to himself or have a book read to him.

Behavior Modification-Start a chart. For each night that he gets to bed on time, he gets a check or star or sticker. For a certain number of stickers, he gets something he wants. You could promise to read from a favorite book if he's in bed at the right time.

Contract-Write up a contract agreeing to offer something he wants if he will get to bed on time without you having to remind him more that once. Write it up. Both of you sign it. Shake on it. Then do it!

GETTING A DAUGHTER TO CLEAN UP HER ROOM

Natural Consequences-Let her leave her room messy. Before long, she won't be able to find clothes, schoolwork, and other things that she needs or wants. She might be embarrassed when someone comes in. She might trip over something and get hurt, or she might break something of hers.

Logical Consequences-You could decide to take everything that is out of place in her room. She could lose them for good or for as long as you want. She might have to buy them back. Another would be allowing her to go to a place that she wants to go only if her room is cleaned up.

Behavior Modification-You could tell her you plan to check her room once or perhaps twice a day. If it is neat enough for you, she will get a check or a star on a chart. When she earns an agreed-upon number of checks or stars, she'll get something she wants. Another possibility is to give her a bowl full of something like marbles or pennies. Place a certain value such as a nickel, a dime, or a penny on each item. Tell her that at various times (either planned or unannounced) during the week, you'll check to see how her room looks. For each item you find out of place, you'll remove a marble or penny. At the end of the week, she can trade in what's left for something she wants.

Contracts-Make an agreement with her that when she keeps her room neat enough to suit you, you'll do something with her or for her or you'll get her something she has been wanting. It might be something you frankly would have done anyway only now she has to earn it.

HELPING A CHILD DO BETTER AT SCHOOL

Natural Consequences-The mother could encourage him to do better, but if he doesn't, just let him face the results. That could include failing his grade or being suspended, or even excluded from school for fighting. Is that being a responsible parent? Could you take that stand if your child was 9? What if he's 17?

Logical Consequences-If he forgets his homework or doesn't complete his classwork, he could be required to stay in his room and do all of it over before he could go out with his friends. Regarding the fight, he could be required to write a letter to the other child or write an essay about fighting for the parent. Since he is having trouble getting along with others, he could be grounded for some length of time. It would be a good idea to teach your child how to get along with others.

Behavior Modification-Work out a chart that lists the areas that are giving the child trouble. It's probably best that you pinpoint just one area to work on. In close cooperation with the teacher, keep track of how he's doing each day. At the end of the week, count up the checks or stars or stickers, and, if he got enough, give him the agreed-upon things. You may want to do this on a daily basis if the problem is severe or if the child is young.

Contracts-Write up an agreement between you and the child explaining what you will do and what he will do. Both of you sign it and shake on it. Keep track of how he's doing and then

Thank you for reading this book. We hope you have found it interesting and that it will help you in the challenging task of raising children successfully.

This book is part of a series called Successful Parenting. In addition to this book which is available in English and Spanish, there are an audiotape of this book and three videotapes of about 20 minutes in length each in Spanish or English versions, called, "Self-Esteem is the Key", "Communication is Crucial", and "Discipline Makes the Difference". Each tape comes with a User's Guide in Spanish or English and a Facilitator's Guide in English for the person putting on a class or workshop.

For further information, please contact:

Richards & Taylor Video Productions
P.O. Box 11851
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27116
1-800-544-2219

THANK YOU!

Appendix

Ten Suggestions for Enhancing Your Children's Self-Esteem

1. *Work on your own self-esteem.*

2. *Praise efforts towards a goal.*

3. *Understand and appreciate each child as an individual.*

4. *Provide opportunities to feel success.*

5. *Allow your children to make decisions.*

6. *When correction is needed, do it in a positive way.*

7. *Praise but don't judge.*

8. *Help your children to feel lovable and capable.*

9. *Establish effective communication.*

10. *Catch them being good.*

Eight Suggestions for Improving Your Communication With Your Children

1. *Use good sending skills.*

2. *Use good listening skills.*

3. *If your child is bothering you, explain that.*

4. *If your child has a problem, you need to listen.*

5. *Ordering or threatening blocks communication.*

6. *Try not to deny your child's feelings.*

7. *Avoid judging, criticizing, blaming, shaming, ridiculing, or name-calling.*

8. *Listen to your child with the same respect with which you'd listen to your friend, your co-worker, or even your boss.*

Ten Suggestions for Disciplining Your Children

1. *Show love and respect for your children.*

2. *Establish clear expectations.*

3. *Use natural consequences.*

4. *Use logical consequences.*

5. *Use behavior modification.*

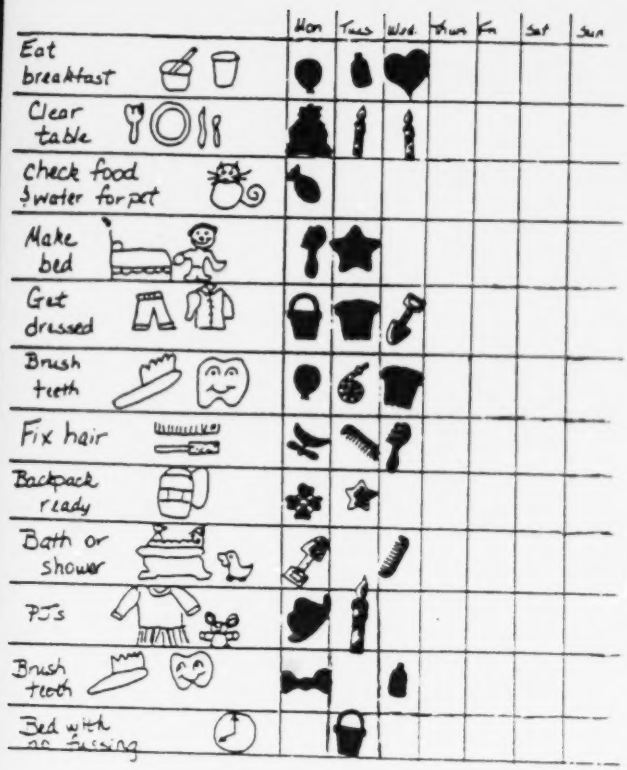
6. *Use time out.*

7. *Follow the suggested procedure to change a specific behavior.*

8. *Use contracts.*

9. *Have family meetings.*

10. *Cope with temper tantrums.*



Name Nathan
Specific behavior Stop hitting brother
Number of times a day 12 times a day
How often you will check morning + afternoon
Have you talked about it with your child? Yes
What will your child get? Candy bar
What are the negative consequences going to be?
time out

time	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
A.M.							
P.M.							

I AM ONE TERRIFIC KID!

I. EXPECTATIONS (√ = + 10, x = - 50, — =0) Name_____

A. Mornings

1. Up, (shower) dress, shoes bed
2. Make bed
3. (Towel away)
4. Backpack ready
5. Snack
6. (3)
7. Eat, clear, scrape, rinse, load
8. Brush teeth, hair, (ribbin)
9. Check off chart
10. Ready!

S M T W T F S

B. Afternoons & Evenings

1. Hwk, checked, in backpack
2. Help with dinner & table
3. Eat, clear, scrape, rinse, load
4. Undress, brush teeth, etc.
5. In bed on time/no calling

II. BONUSES (@ 10 each) Kindnesses to brother, posite to others

III. CHORES FOR PAY (VARIES)

CALCULATIONS

Expectations_____
+ bonuses_____
+ chores_____
TOTAL ALLOWANCE_____

DISBURSEMENTS

self (30%)_____
gift (30%)_____
bank (30%)_____
church (10%)_____

I Am One Terrific Kid!

Scott	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Eat breakfast	★	●	🕯				
Make bed		★	●				
Brush teeth	★	●					
Fix hair	★	★	●				
Backpack ✓	☆	🕯	●				
Homework	★	●					
Bath or shower	★	🕯					